

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph at page 4, lines 20 to page 5, line 4 with the following amended paragraph:

The first software agent communicates information on the status of the backup device or devices that it is responsible for to the second software agent. The first software agent may also communicate[[s]] the status of the network computing devices that it is responsible for the backup of to the second software agent. This allows the second software agent to stand in for the first software agent when the first software agent is unable to perform at its full functionality. The second software agent is able to manage the backup of the network computing devices that the first software agent is responsible for when the first software agent is unable to do so.

Please replace the paragraph at page 9, lines 6-13 with the following amended paragraph:

The network device 110 contains a first manager component such as manager component 114. The manager component 114 is a software agent responsible for ~~the~~ maintaining backup parameters of the backups in the backup cell 100, and initiating a backup policy for the attached network computing devices according to those parameters. The parameters can include schedules of backups, aging policies, pruning policies, and backup media usage policies. Thus, through the operation of the manager component 114, an administrator can define the characteristics of the backup actions for the network computing devices associated with the backup cell 100.

Please replace the paragraph at page 9, lines 17-21 with the following amended paragraph:

The network device 160 contains a second manager component such as manager component 164 that is responsible for the backup parameters of the backups in the backup cell 150. The manager component 164 is similar in operation and in functionality to the manager component 114 in the backup cell 100. Thus, through the operation of the manager component 164, an administrator can define the characteristics of the backup actions for the backup cell 160.

Please replace the paragraph at page 10, line 21 to page 11, line 6 with the following amended paragraph:

Alternatively Or, interaction with the remote manager component 164 could take place when an administrator who is logged into the network device 160 would like to administer activity that takes place in the backup cell 100. Or splitting of administrative functionality between the manager components 114 and 164 could take place, thus centralizing some or all of the definition of the functionality of the backup schemes to a common set of parameters across associated backup cells. Or, the administrative authority of the manager components may be highly decentralized, and the alternative control of another backup cell may be used only when the manager component of another backup has failed for some reason.

Please replace the paragraph at page 12, line 21 to page 13, line 3 with the following amended paragraph:

Fig. 2 is a functional block diagram of an embodiment of the hierarchical backup system of Fig. 1 embodying data transfer between the components comprising the individual backup cell and the transfer of data outside the backup cell. The backup cell 200 comprises the network computing devices 210, 220, and 230. The network computing device 210 runs a first manager component such as manager component 212, responsible for the backup parameters of the backup cell 200, as described before.

Please replace the paragraph at page 15, lines 1-7 with the following amended paragraph:

The manager component 212 is able to receive and send this indexed information to the second manager component such as manager component 262 running on the network computing device 260. Additional indexed information on the backup can exist distributed about the various media components, and the manager components 212 or 262 can access this information by querying the proper media component for it. Thus, the information required to make the proper query can be passed among the manager components as well. The manager component 262 can itself be a manager component for the backup cell where it resides.

Please replace the paragraph at page 16, lines 13-16 with the following amended paragraph:

In this case, one physical first manager component such as manager component 310 could be logically divided into several virtual manager components 320, 330, and 340. Each of the virtual manager components 320, 330, and 340 would be

responsible for the backup functionality of portions of the physical network devices located in the physical backup cell.

Please replace the paragraph at page 17, lines 9-12 with the following amended paragraph:

A remote network device 380 operates a second manager component such as manager component 385. The manager component is in communication with the manager component 310. As such, the manager component 310 can be configured to supervise the activities of the manager component 310, and the virtual manager components 320, 330, and 340.